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REPORT

TO THE

R. W. Grand Encampment

I O O F

OF CALIFORNIA.

BY

DAVID MEEKER AND WM. A. GILMAN,

REPRESENTATIVES TO THE R. W. GRAND LODGE
OF THE UNITED STATES.

MAY, 1868.

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TO THE

R. W. GRAND ENCAMPMENT, I. O. O. F.,

OF CALIFORNIA.

Your Representatives to the R. W. Grand Lodge of the United States, respectfully report that they attended the Annual Communication of that R. W. Grand Body, convened in the city of New York on the 16th day of September, 1867.

The Grand Lodge of the United States was welcomed in the most cordial manner by Grand Master Wm. Gould, of the Grand Lodge of the State of New York.

All the subordinate jurisdictions were represented, and the number of representatives in attendance was larger than at any former communication.

The session was entirely harmonious, peaceful and quiet. No unkind word was spoken, or any sectional feeling manifested, and all seemed to realize that we were a band of Brothers engaged in the blessed work of benevolence and charity, and the promotion of good will among men.

Were it not for well established precedents, your Representatives would not think it necessary to recapitulate much, if any, of the proceedings of the R. W. Grand Body to which we were accredited—its proceedings having been published in the "New Age," an official organ of this R. W. Grand Body, and, as usual, in pamphlet form by the R. W. Grand Lodge of the United States, and distributed very generally throughout this jurisdiction.

We report the following proceedings as among, if not all that would have any special interest to this R. W. Grand Body.

REVISION OF THE WORK.

No alteration was made in the secret work of the Order. The constitution requires an unanimous vote to do so. An amendment was proposed to the Constitution in 1866, that it may be amended by the assent of four-fifths of the Grand Lodge. It required a three-fourth vote to adopt this proposed amendment, which was lost, by a vote of ayes 61, nays 39.

An amendment that the work may be changed by a vote of nine-tenths was also lost; ayes 56, nays 37.

NON-PAYMENT OF DUES.

The special committee appointed at the session of 1866, with instructions to report at the next session, 1867, a "Uniform Law Prohibiting Expulsions for non-payment of Dues, and Regulating Suspensions for the same cause," submitted the following resolutions, which were referred to the next annual communication.

Resolved, That it shall not be legal to expel or suspend members of this Order for non-payment of dues.

Resolved, That any member of a subordinate Lodge or Encampment of this Order, failing to pay his regular dues, as required by the By-Laws of such subordinate, until the arrears thereof, exclusive of fines and assessments, are equal in amount to one year's dues, shall be held to have voluntarily resigned his membership in such subordinate, and shall be dropped from the roll thereof; and he shall take rank in the Order from and after such dropping from the roll, as an Ancient Odd Fellow. *Provided*, however, that no member shall be thus dropped while under charges for misconduct.

Resolved, That any person thus dropped, may be readmitted to membership, either in his former subordinate, or

in any other of the jurisdictions of this Order, subject to the general and local laws regarding residence, upon application in the same manner as may be required of a candidate for initiation; and he shall pay an initiation fee in no case to exceed the customary initiation fee provided for by the By-Laws of the subordinate to which such application may be made; and he shall take such rank only in such subordinate as he may prove himself entitled to.

Resolved, That the provisions of these resolutions shall apply to all persons heretofore suspended, expelled or dropped from membership for non-payment of dues—and for no other cause; and to members of defunct subordinate Lodges or Encampments.

Resolved, That the foregoing resolutions shall have the full force and effect of positive law, and shall go into operation from and after the adoption thereof by this Grand Body.

State Grand Bodies are hereby directed to promulgate the same for the instruction of their subordinates, without unnecessary delay; and further, to make all local legislation necessary to give effect hereto in their several jurisdictions.

Resolved, That the R. W. Grand Corresponding and Recording Secretary is hereby instructed to forward copies of these resolutions to the several State Grand Bodies, and to the subordinates under the immediate jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of the United States, as soon as may be practicable after the adjournment of this Body.

AMENDMENTS PROPOSED.

The first two relate to the qualifications of Grand Representatives, the others to a change in the name of the Grand Lodge.

Resolved, That Sec. 3 of Art. IX, of the Constitution of the Grand Lodge of the United States, be amended by striking out the words, "have received the Royal Purple Degree be," and insert the words "be a Past Chief Patriarch," and in the

second and third lines of said section as printed on page 9 of the Digest of 1863.

Amend Sec. 3, Art. IX, of the Constitution of this Grand Lodge by striking out the words, "he must have received the Royal Purple Degree," and insert the words, "he must be entitled to receive the Grand Encampment Degree."

Resolved, That Art. I, Sec. 1, of the Constitution of this Grand Lodge be amended by striking out the words, "of the United States," so that it shall read, "This Lodge shall be known by the name, style and title of the Grand Lodge of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows."

Amend Sec. 1 of Art. I, by striking out the words, "Grand Lodge of the United States," and inserting, 'Supreme Lodge.'

Resolved, That the report be re-committed, with instructions to the committee to report an amendment to Art. I, Sec. 1, of the Constitution, so that it may read as follows:

SEC. 1. This Lodge shall be known by the name, style and title of the Grand Lodge of America of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows.

DEGREE OF REBEKAH.

The Committee on Abolishing the Degree of Rebekah, reported as follows:

Judging from the action of many of the Grand Bodies represented on this floor, and from the petitions presented, it seems to your committee that the sentiment of the Order demands the continuance of the Degree, and that it should be improved and perfected by appropriate legislation, so that it may become a working Degree, having its own officers, and transacting such legitimate business as may belong to it; and we offer the following resolution:

Resolved, That the subject matter of the petitions be referred to the Legislative Committee, with instructions to sub-

mit such appropriate legislation as will further the objects of the petitioners.

The Legislative Committee will probably make a report at the next session.

RESOLUTIONS, REPORTS, AND DECISIONS ADOPTED.

1. Public installations cannot be held, unless the State Grand Body has given consent to her subordinates to have the same; and where the Grand Master of the jurisdiction has forbidden the same, the Grand Sire has no power to interfere with his decision.

The decision of the Grand Master is binding, until reversed by his Grand Lodge; unless his decision is in direct conflict with the Constitution and Laws of the Grand Lodge of the United States.

2. The R. W. Grand Lodge of the United States, having decided, by her Constitution, the necessary qualifications for membership in the Order, no Grand Body has the right to change the same.

3. A person who has lost an arm, is not eligible for membership in the Order by initiation.

4. The Legislative Committee have had under consideration the following resolution, offered by Rep. Pearson, of Massachusetts, viz:

"*Resolved*, That subordinate Lodges and Encampments may re-elect their officers, and that all laws to the contrary be, and are hereby repealed;" and beg leave to report that they cannot find that this Grand Lodge has ever legislated upon this subject, but apparently it has been left to local legislation.

The committee are of the opinion, that this right should remain under the control of the State, District, and Territorial Grand Jurisdictions; and, in order to remove all doubt on the subject, recommend the adoption of the following resolution:

Resolved, That the right of subordinate Lodges and Encampments to re-elect their officers, is under the control of the several State, District, and Territorial Grand Bodies.

5. The Legislative Committee, to whom was referred the resolution of Rep. Willard, of Illinois, on the subject of the resuscitation of defunct Lodges, beg leave to report, that, upon investigation, they find that the law providing for reviving extinct subordinate bodies, is differently understood in the various jurisdictions, which difference of interpretation has seriously affected the action of Grand Bodies in the good work of restoring such subordinates to active participation in the work of the Order; and believing that some general rule should be adopted on the subject, they submit the following resolution for adoption:

Resolved, That, whenever, in the judgment of the State Grand Body, it may be deemed expedient, it shall be lawful to allow a Lodge or Encampment to be resuscitated upon the application of five of the former members of the Lodge, or seven of the former members of the Encampment, as the case may be, and to give the name, charter and effects of such defunct subordinate to such applicants. *Provided*, that the petitioners, at the time of their application, shall not be connected with any other Lodge or Encampment.

6. The Legislative Committee, to whom the Report of the Committee on the State of the Order, in relation to a paper purporting to be a diploma for the lady members of the Degree of Rebekah, has been referred, in obedience to instructions, recommend the following resolutions:

Resolved, That State Grand Bodies are hereby required to expel from their own membership, and subordinate Lodges and Encampments to expel from the Order, any member thereof who shall attach to any chart, certificate, diploma, or other document, any copy or impression of the Seal of this Grand Lodge, of which he has not the official use and custody.

Resolved, That the above named Grand Bodies shall inflict the same penalty upon any member knowingly publishing or circulating any diploma, or certificate, purporting to be by authority which is not authorized by law.

7. *Resolved*, That the 26th of April be, and the same is, hereby established as the anniversary of the Order, and all Grand Lodges and Encampments are requested to urge their subordinates to observe the day in some appropriate manner.

8. The committee on the state of the Order, to whom was referred the query from the Grand Encampment of New Jersey—

Is it proper for a Grand Encampment to approve a Constitution and By-Laws of a subordinate Encampment in which previous service as High Priest is made a necessary qualification to eligibility as a candidate for Chief Patriarch?

Report that they have considered the query, and are of the opinion that Grand Encampments have the right to approve the Constitution and By-Laws of a subordinate Encampment with the provision named in the query, provided no general law exists in the jurisdiction on that subject.

One Grand Encampment and five subordinate Encampments have been instituted during the year, viz:

The Grand Encampment of Kansas; Colorado Encampment, No. 1, and Denver Encampment, 2, Colorado; Rochester Encampment, No. 2, and Nicholet Encampment, No. 3, Minnesota; and Stuart Encampment, at Picton, Nova Scotia.

NON-BENEFICIAL MEMBERSHIP.

The subject of allowing non-beneficial membership, although favorably reported upon by a majority of the special committee appointed at the previous session, was lost by a vote of ayes 32, nays 64. For the ayes and nays, see Grand Lodge Journal, page 4154.

EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF GRAND SIRE JAMES P. SANDERS.

If at any time it was entertained by our founders, which I very much doubt, that our Lodges were to be regarded as merely Health Insurance Offices, where the insurer for a small pittance, could obtain relief in time of sickness, in my opinion that time has passed away.

Now higher thoughts and duties are intended to be inculcated, and when we lose sight of those in the struggle for pecuniary gain, we lose sight of the first principles of our Order.

EXTRACTS FROM THE REPORT OF THE R. W. GRAND AND CORRESPONDING SECRETARY, JAMES L. RIDGELY.

"*California.*—The very interesting and detailed letter of the distinguished Grand Sec'y and Grand Scribe of this great State, Bro. T. Rodgers Johnson, accompanying the Annual Reports, requires no comment from me; it tells for itself the high degree of prosperity which the Order has reached in California.

The large contributions which the jurisdiction has supplied to the Treasury of the Grand Lodge, and the splendid liberality displayed in behalf of the suffering Brotherhood of the South, possess of themselves an eloquence of voice which speaks in powerful tones of the broad spirit of Fraternity pervading that State."

Also from the conclusion of the same report—

"A vast Brotherhood, inspired by the purest philanthropy, toils in generous rivalry, and wearies not in its conflict for the vindication of a higher and holier humanity among men.

"With a liberal and generous hand it has scattered its blessings; not only promptly meeting just demands upon its treasure, but often moving outside its legitimate sphere, to expend its beneficence upon other meritorious subjects, when properly presented.

"Peace, Concord, Fraternity, are the cardinal elements of our

power; Friendship, Love, Truth, chastened by a high moral culture, the single idea of our great mission. Under this standard uplifted, its march has been onward, until it has gathered within its ranks the good and the wise in every State, District and Territory of our country, of the adjacent provinces, and of the islands contiguous; and will, by the Divine aid, at no distant future, penetrate wherever civilization has found a home on earth."

CONCLUSION.

The well-considered and ample arrangements made by a committee of the Grand Lodge of the State of New York, of which committee P. G. Sire John A. Kennedy was chairman, and P. G. M., John G. Clayton, Sec'y, for the reception and entertainment of the R. W. Grand Lodge of the United States, were entirely worthy of the great metropolis of the country—a city whose public and private institutions, religious, charitable, benevolent, reformatory and correctional—with its great and unparalleled Central Park—and some of these supported by private associations and individuals with a princely munificence, are well worthy the laudable pride of its citizens and the emulation of other cities.

Finally, Patriarchs, fully sensible, we hope, of the responsible duties and high honor conferred upon us, we shall endeavor to show you our appreciation of your kindness, by upholding and supporting to the extent of our ability, through all of life that remains to us, the great American Benevolent and Charitable Institution, I. O. O. F., which has, as we believe, the best systematized plan of Benevolence and Charity practiced among men or known on earth.

Respectfully submitted.

DAVID MEEKER,
W. A. GILMAN.